

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release November 5, 1975

Levitt 202/343-5634

SCRATCHBOARD DRAWING OF CANADA GEESE WINS DUCK STAMP CONTEST

A striking India ink scratchboard drawing of a pair of Canada geese and their brood by Alderson Magee of Sharon, Connecticut, won the 1976-77 Duck Stamp competition on October 29 at the Interior Department.

Magee's design will be reproduced on next year's \$5 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp which migratory waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and older are required to purchase. Revenues from the stamp are used to purchase wetland habitat for waterfowl.

Magee is a well known artist whose works have won several other competitions in recent years, although this was his first entry in the Duck Stamp contest. He has had no formal schooling in art and prior to changing careers in 1971 was a full-time commercial pilot and representative for a jet engine manufacturer. Then, after reading about it, he became interested in the scratchboard technique--a meticulous process in which India ink baked on china clay is removed by scratching the surface with engraver's tools. It is one of the most painstaking artistic techniques. No mistakes can be made.

His work won over those of 263 other entrants, a record number for the contest, scoring 49 out of a possible 50 points.

A panel of judges selected for the contest by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed included William G. Conway, General Director of the New York Zoological Society; Les Line, Editor, Audubon Magazine;

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Larry Jahn, Vice President, Wildlife Management Institute; Guy A. Greenwell, Bird Unit Curator, National Zoological Park; and George Reiger, Senior Editor, National Wildlife Magazine.

Although there is no official prize other than a sheet of stamps autographed by the Secretary of the Interior, in recent years the winning design has gained immediate commercial value in the wildlife art and stamp collecting marketplaces. It is not uncommon for the artist to net more than \$200,000 for reprint sales.

The competition is the only art contest regularly sponsored by the Federal Government. The colorful stamps constitute the longest running annually issued series of stamps in revenue or postage stamp history.

All revenue from the stamps, except the cost of printing and distribution is used to purchase wetland habitat for waterfowl. Since 1934 when Duck Stamps first went on sale, over \$160 million in revenue has been collected and used for the acquisition of 2 million acres of prime waterfowl habitat. By purchasing the stamps, more than 2 million hunters annually provide close to \$11 million in revenue.

This year, the Interior Department is encouraging non-hunters who also enjoy the wildlife resource through photography, birdwatching, and other activities to contribute to the U.S. conservation effort by buying a stamp.

Next year's issue will go on sale at post offices on July 1, 1976.

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